



## **Aging Services Collaborative of Santa Clara County**

### **2014-2015 Policy Agenda**

Today, over 213,000 individuals are age 65+ in Santa Clara County, based on 2012 census estimates. According to the County's 2012-16 Area Agency on Aging report, nearly half of individuals age 65+ are economically insecure and living in poverty or barely staving off poverty as measured by the Elder Economic Security Index. By 2030, this figure will increase dramatically, consistent with the rapid growth in the aging demographic. Nearly all older adults (74%) choose to live independently and engage in their community for as long as possible and most do not move out of their community as they age.

The Aging Services Collaborative of Santa Clara County (ASC) is a consortium of organizations and individuals working together to provide leadership and build community-wide capacity to support, maintain, and promote the well-being of older adults and their caregivers in Santa Clara County.

ASC membership is comprised of more than 150 active individuals representing 87 organizations and has a reach of 31,250 people per month. ASC members are committed to making Santa Clara County a livable community for all of us as we age. This means the inclusion of services and support systems that are coordinated and easily accessible to enable older adults to maintain their health, to live independently and lead productive and satisfying lives. Planning for a growing older population is a priority for the ASC, particularly to meet the changing needs of the frail, disabled and homebound. Every sector of the community is affected by the dramatic changes in our population demographic. Public agencies, community based organizations and elected officials must examine how prepared are their institutions and infrastructure to respond to this shift and plan accordingly.

ASC 2014-15 Policy Agenda will strategically inform, educate and/or otherwise engage key local stakeholders, policy makers and consumers at a grassroots level.

ASC 2014-15 priorities include:

#### **1. Secure and Maintain Reliable Funding for Aging Services Infrastructure**

In recent years, the aging services sector has sustained significant funding reductions from government, foundations, and private sources leaving them less equipped to respond to the needs of the growing older adult population. Recent community needs assessments, such as the July 2012-June 2016 Council on Aging (now Sourcewise) Area Plan submitted to the CA Department on Aging, and the April 2012 *Santa Clara County Seniors' Agenda: A Quality of Life Assessment*, highlight a shortage of services and supports including case management, system navigation, social day care, affordable non-medical home-care services, legal services, transportation and other supportive services for older adults. Public and

private funds provide essential support to community based organizations that provide the services and infrastructure to address safety net needs.

The ASC will seek shared solutions and work for the re-investment of funds and to identify alternative revenue to support safety net and other key community supports. ASC efforts will focus on, but are not limited to:

- Advocating for a committed investment for funding and strategies to support the service infrastructure, including community based organizations, City and or County human and/or health systems for older adults.
- Supporting the Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) Request for Proposal (RFP) process to fund the Community Living Connection (CLC) model of case management, as well as other RFP processes.
- Participating in needs assessments and attending and monitoring budget and funding meetings that impact the aging services infrastructure in Santa Clara county for FY 2014-15 and beyond
- Supporting the Santa Clara County Seniors' Agenda policy recommendations.
- Convening partners and funders to create a shared definition of safety net programs, to establish an accurate baseline of current City/County funding for aging services, and to work towards coordinating future funding decisions related to aging services.

## **2. Re-investment to create robust senior/community centers**

Senior Centers have become one of the most widely used services among older adults, serving as a gateway for older adults to access vital community services that assist them to live safely and independently in the community. Senior Centers are designated focal points that allow older adults to access services in one place. Services commonly found in Senior Centers include:

- Nutrition Programs
- Information and Assistance
- Health and fitness programs
- Transportation services
- Public benefits and medical insurance counseling
- Volunteer opportunities
- Legal Assistance
- Social and recreational activities
- Educational and arts programs

Older adults who participate in Senior Center programs are able to manage and delay the onset of chronic disease and achieve measureable improvements in their physical, social, emotional, mental and economic well-being. However, fragmented and inconsistent community investment in Senior Centers threatens their ability to be able to provide the scope of services that are considered "best practices", therefore lessening the ability for Senior Centers to provide impactful services at the level needed by our growing older adult population.

### **3. Facilitate an Integrated System of Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS)**

The ASC is part of The SCAN Foundation's Community of Constituents Initiative, building a statewide movement to transform the system of care so that all Californians can age with dignity, choice and independence.

As we age, our health and ability to live independently relies upon key services and supports including informal caregivers. Equally critical is how these services are integrated with health care and coordinated for the consumer. Long term services and supports (LTSS) for older adults and adults with disabilities in Santa Clara County are not organized in an integrated way, but the implementation of the Affordable care Act and the California Coordinated Care Initiative (CCI) offers opportunities for such integration. In partnership with other key stakeholders, ASC will explore the potential for LTSS integration in Santa Clara County, determine solutions and guide improvements in the organization, availability and financing of LTSS. To that end, ASC will:

- Continue to serve as a trusted source of information about the Coordinated Care Initiative
- Coordinate and make recommendations for outreach and education efforts that will inform providers and beneficiaries for successful implementation of the Cal MediConnect Pilot Program in Santa Clara County through partnership with CCI Communication committee, HICAP and other initiatives
- Build coordinated leadership and policy to create an integrated system of long term services and supports in Santa Clara County
- Engage LTSS Consumers as advocates through expansion of the AGENTS for Change program that include LTSS consumers, including older adults and the disability community
- Bridge the gap and build partnerships with a focus on inclusion between organizations and advocates for seniors and person with disabilities

### **4. Secure resources to address the growing needs for Alzheimer's disease (AD) and related dementia patients, their caregivers and families**

Various forms of dementia, with Alzheimer's disease, leading the way, are the most expensive diseases in America, with costs set to skyrocket in the years ahead. Nearly 1 in 5 Medicare dollars is spent on a person with AD. Today 1 in 6 women worldwide over age 60 are living with AD. One half of men and women over age 85 are living with AD. This international public health crisis is seen and felt in Santa Clara County. According to the California Data Report, nearly 28,000 adults 55+ were living with AD in Santa Clara County in 2008. By 2030, this number is projected to increase to 58,600.

ASC members urge leaders in Santa Clara County to put a plan in place to:

- Identify those with AD and related dementias and their caregivers
- Develop an integrated care plan to keep costs down
- Accommodate county services and systems to ensure that the unique needs of those with AD and related dementias and their caregivers are being met

### **Efforts ASC is watching**

These are efforts that our members care about and ASC will continue to support, but are not part of the current work plan. This allows ASC members to be ready to respond to requests for support and other opportunities.

### **Housing needs of older adults**

The crisis in affordable and functional housing across Santa Clara County is recognized in the 2012 County Seniors' Agenda. Older adults and adults with disabilities need to be informed about their rights, so they can age in place in the housing of their choice for as long as possible. To address these issues, ASC efforts will include:

- Education and advocacy (at municipal levels) for both land use policies and the need for affordable and functional senior housing to support older adults ability to age in the community
- Staying informed about and offering support for existing efforts that address the availability of affordable and functional housing for adults aged 55+, such as the Housing Task Group of the Seniors' Agenda.

### **Strengthen and Sustain Transportation Services**

The accelerated growth of the older adult population, and the escalating advanced age and frailty of that population, has made it increasingly difficult for older adults and caregivers to access essential services due to inadequate transportation. A lack of coordination, coupled with a dearth of options to meet each individual's unique transportation needs, has resulted in barriers to those safety services that promote and maintain independent living in the community. To address the need for coordinated and accessible transportation, the ASC is committed to partnering and collaborating with key stakeholders, providers and advocacy groups to:

- Support an effective and efficient mobility management program for senior transportation
- Support ongoing evaluation of mobility management program efficacy for senior nutrition transportation

### **Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)**

Beginning in 2003, the Federal Administration on Aging, now the Administration for Community Living (ACL) joined with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to promote and fund Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs). In California, ADRC's are known as Aging and Disability Resource Connections. They are designed to help individuals learn more about their community long term

services and supports option and get the services they need. In Santa Clara County, the core ADRC partners are Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SV-ILC) and Sourcewise. ASC members will

- Be informed about the progress the core partners make towards developing an ADRC model
- Work with core partners to assure community members are involved in the process.

### **Diversity and Cultural Competency**

Santa Clara County, is one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the US with 37% of the population being foreign-born, and over half of residents speak a language other than English at home. It is important that programs, policies and services meet the needs of this diverse population in a way that effectively and sensitively works with people from various races, ethnicities, who speak different languages and have different life experiences.

### **Elder Abuse Prevention**

Elder abuse and neglect is on the rise. Resources supporting government entities (Adult Protective Services) and non-profit services (case management, legal services and Long Term Care Ombudsman) are not sufficient to address the growing need for protective and supportive services related to elder abuse prevention. ASC efforts will include:

- Supporting the Santa Clara County Seniors' Agenda policy recommendations on Elder Abuse Prevention

